2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

621 lack of permanence. The village buildings are moved, as we have
●[166] seen, every few years, even though the new huts are usually built within a ten-mile radius, at the most, from the old. But it is not only the site of the settlement that is changed. The community itself alters both in size and composition. It consists in the first
621 instance of a headman who has won permission from the chief
624 to build a village by proving that a party of his near relatives is ready to live with him and to accept his authority.[1] Since polygamy is the exception rather than the rule among commoners, he cannot hope to find a sufficient following among his wives and their children as can the Southern Bantu patriarchs, but he must rely on the strength of a number of other kinship ties which are described in detail below. If he is successful, the village will grow. He and the elder men of the community will attract more and more of their relatives to live with them, while their own children are in the meantime growing up. Thus the composition of the village becomes more varied as the years go by. On the death of the headman, he is succeeded by his heir, his brother, his maternal nephew, or maternal grandson, and the latter in his turn may attract his own near relatives to join the village. The headman's title is passed on in succession just as long as a sufficient body of relatives are willing to acknowledge the new heir. Thus, of the 160 villages in Citimukulu's territory in 1933, 63 had been in existence during the headmanship of three holders of the title, 16 during two, 25 during one, and 46 were new villages just built. In 19 cases, old and new had been amalgamated.

621 On the other hand, the original headman may have been unsuccessful in holding his village together, and its component households will then have split off, so that the village gradually dwindles in size until it finally breaks up and disappears. This is the inevitable end of all Bemba villages, except in the case of the chief's or the hereditary councillors (*bakabilo*), whose ancestors have ruled over villages in the same locality for twenty or more generations apparently. The changes in the size and membership of a village may coincide with the death of the headman or the appointment of his sucessor but more often with the removal of the village to a new site.[2] The characteristic kinship and political system of the Bemba occasions such changes, and the practice of shifting

[1] The personal favour of the chief is also necessary.
[2] Cf. the example given on pp. 156–7.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

natives are much more free to move about the country than formerly, he would be afraid his subjects would leave him. I have, however, seen a case of a chief borrowing land temporarily. In November 1931 Nkula asked one of the villagers for the use of his garden mounds so that he might sow them with ground-nuts for one season. The word used was *ukuashima*, or 'to borrow', and in this case the original owner of the beds had apparently the right to ask the chief for ground-nuts for the use of his family at any time he pleased. I saw the chief hand him over a large sack on his request. Otherwise the commoner's rights to land he has occupied seem to be respected, and according to native informants the same held good even of the autocratic rulers of pre-European days.

On the other hand it is impossible for a Bemba to cultivate in a chief's territory without the latter's permission. In the old days if one chief trespassed, even unwittingly, on the ground of another, the former had to give a substantial present such as an elephant tusk or a cow to the latter. Nowadays Citimukulu told me he would expect a gift of beer, even if it were a close relative who had made a garden within the boundary of his *icalo*. It is apparently a usual way of picking a quarrel to start cutting trees over another chief's borders, ill-defined though the latter often are. The late Nkula, giving evidence before a white magistrate during a case of disputed succession, said, 'I knew he wanted to claim the stool (i.e. office of chieftainship) because he sent men to cut trees on my land.'

A commoner, as distinct from a fellow chief, has to come and make obeisance to the *mfumu* and ask permission to settle. He usually brings a present to court, and is welcomed as adding to the economic assets of the district. Near Kasama in 1934 I once met Citimukulu touring his villages. Two elderly men from the territory of Makassa, near Abercorn, about 100 miles away, arrived with their younger relatives carrying a gourd of beer. They rolled on the ground and clapped (the usual formal salute) and said they wanted to settle at a certain village, but that the inhabitants were hostile to the suggestion. The Paramount received them with enthusiasm, always keen to add to the number of his subjects. He told them to settle where they wanted to cultivate, and to bring him tribute of what they grew. In the old days failure to get formal permission to cut trees in any *icalo* would have been punished by seizure of half the crop, or the burning of the cut branches

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

166
622
643

before they had been properly piled.[1] I was told that nowadays a chief would not take such a drastic step, but that he would certainly send for the intruder and demand tribute. The shifting cultivator is not free to build a hut where he pleases, although in this empty country he is not limited as to the amount of bush he clears.

The Chief's Supernatural Powers.

622
774
643

It must be remembered too that a Bemba wants not only the right to make a garden, but also an assurance that the bush he cultivates will give him food. Now the productive capacity of the *mpanga* depends, he believes, entirely on the beneficence of the tutelary deities associated with it, and the goodwill of these supernatural beings can only be secured by the prayers of the chief and his observance of a particular way of life. When the Bemba chief is installed (*ukupyanika*) he acquires, as guardian spirits, the *imipashi* of the dead rulers of the land, of whom he is of course the lineal descendant in the matrilineal line. Thereafter he is believed in his own person to affect the fortunes of his land. He is 'to spread his spittle in blessing on the land' (*ukufunga mate mu calo*); he is to rectify it (*ukulungame calo*); he is to work it (*ukubomfele calo*). In fact the Paramount should not leave his territory for fear that its fertility should suffer, and in March 1934, when the Citimukulu was summoned to Lusaka to meet Prince George, he was obliged to offer special prayers and cloth to his *imipashi*, explaining the compulsion put upon him. He told the spirits that the Europeans to whom they had given the land must be obeyed. 'We have got to go on a journey. Those who installed us in this land, your people, have called us to see the son of the King. Now we cannot refuse. No, not to those who gave us many possessions and money and many cloths. You Kampampa Mutanshi (the first ancestor) here is your cloth! You the Great one, who gave the land to Pokili (the next ancestor) so that he might stay in the capital. Let Lubemba prosper. For we are going to strange lands. Farewell.'[2]

[1] Cullen Gouldsbury denies this and says that a pot of beer only need be given to the chief by a tribesman while a member of another tribe would have to accept the rule of the chief and then give half the product of his gardens as tribute. Cullen Gouldsbury, 'Notes on the Customary Law of the Awemba', *Journ. of the African Society*, vol. xiv, no. lvi, 1915, p. 375.

[2] *Tuli no bulendo. Abatuteka mu calo, bantu benu, na batuita kukuya mona*

3: Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1956
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

Social Structure

When a man dies his name, his kinship duties and his hereditary bow are passed on to his sister's son or to her grandson through a daughter. The heir actually becomes the dead man in a social sense: he adopts the kinship terms the latter used, calling, for instance, 'maternal nephew' the person he would previously have called 'brother'. The same positional succession takes place in the matrilineal line for women, and a dead woman will be replaced by her sister or a maternal granddaughter. In this system women are honoured as the bearers of many children and such a woman is said to found a house.

In the case of the royal crocodile clan the maintenance of descent is even more important. All senior chieftainships in Lubemba, the country of the Bemba, are held by members of the royal lineage.

A successor to such a chieftainship has access to 'great spirits', those of his dead predecessors, and he not only prays to them at the sacred shrines in his capital, but he acquires supernatural powers in his own person, so that he can bless and curse. His good health and vitality bring blessings to the community, and his ill-health or death, the reverse.

Princesses have the special duty to bear fine children in order to provide the country with chiefs, and they are honoured for doing so. The spirits of royal women are mentioned in prayer in tender and grateful terms as 'those who carried us in skins on their backs and gave us suck'. The first ancestress, Bwalya Cabala, is buried in a grove which is one of the most sacred places in Lubemba.[1]

Bemba clans are not segmentary. The effective kinship group within the clan is a three or four generation group, the men and women who trace their descent to a common great-grandmother and who remember a village of origin (*cifulo*). These are not corporate matrilineages in any territorial sense. The kinship system makes for a great deal of movement from village to village during a man's or a woman's life. The villages themselves change in composition and move from place to place following the shifting cultivation.

There appear to be no fixed leaders of the matrilineage, except in the case of the royal dynasty, but this group is the unit of succession to the offices and the names of dead men and women and to their ancestral spirits.

[1] Cf. *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, p. 357.

131 towards the Luapula and, in several respects, markedly differing from the surrounding plateau country.

226 The abundance of fish in the Luapula, which is free from rapids and easily navigable below Johnston Falls near the mouth of the Luongo, makes fishing an important economic pursuit in which virtually all the adult male population participate and to which are attached elaborate ritual observ-
[439] ances. (see below p.94) Besides being an important item in the native diet, fish constitutes the chief trading asset of the country.

134 On the plateau, where soils are poorer and the population is almost exclusively dependent on agriculture for its livelihood, the shifting
241 *citemene* system of cultivation is the rule. In the valley, however, the rich alluvial deposits make possible a semi-permanent mound cultivation; this removes the necessity for changing village sites periodically and results in a greater stability. Cassava, of little account on the plateau, where finger millet and Kaffir corn predominate, is the staple food crop in the valley.

186 Common traditions accumulated over two centuries, during which the valley constituted the core of Kazembe's kingdom, have made the population conscious and proud of its past.

611 The patrilineal reckoning of descent introduced and established by the Lunda, as well as their tribal heterogeneity, mark the valley peoples off from the matrilineal and ethnically homogeneous neighbouring tribes: the Shila-Katya (north west), Shila (north), Lungu, Chishinga (east), Mukulo, Aushi (south), Lamba (south-west), and Lomotwa (west).

631 The Kazembe is now Paramount over the western (Northern Rhodesia) side of the valley, ruling directly in the province surrounding his capital. His kingdom is divided into eight chiefdoms, ruled by the following chiefs (from Lake Mweru southward): Kambwali, Kanyembo, Kazembe himself, Lukwesa, Lubunda, Kashiba, Mulundu, and Katuta. Sub-chiefs Muyembe and Kapesa administer two districts carved out of the metropolitan chiefdom but cannot hold courts. Lubunda, Mulundu, Katuta and Kapesa are of Chishinga extraction, the others are Lunda.

Kilwa island, with its Swahili chief Nshimba, now falls outside the Kazembe's kingdom.

TRIBAL MIXTURE

166 As a result of piecemeal settlement and frequent inter-marriage the component tribal groups are as a rule distributed over the whole territory.
619 Local concentrations occur nevertheless: the Shila and Tabwa predominate in the extreme north, the Lungu in the Mulele district, the Chishinga in the Mununshi valley. A Bemba colony occupies land between Lake Mofwe and Lake Mweru granted to Mwawamukupa in return for the assistance given by his brother Mwaba, a Bemba chief, in opposing the invading Bayeke and re-establishing the fugitive Kazembe. On Kilwa island the descendants of Swahili slavers and Nyamwezi copper traders live alongside the aboriginal Shila.

The bulk of the population is made up of the Shila, Lunda, Chishinga,

5:Slaski E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

Luapula Peoples

Tabwa (Aitawa), Lungu, Bemba, and Aushi (including their off-shoots the Kawendi and Mukulo). In addition there are Bwile (Bwiri), Mambwe, Bisa, Ngumbo, Mukulu, Lala, Lamba, Lomotwa, Yeke (Nyamwezi) and Swahili elements. The presence of the Batembo pygmies, whom Maes and Boone(1) place just south of Lake Mweru on their tribal map of the region, is not confirmed by other authorities. The extent of tribal mixture is shown by the fact that the headmen of thirty-four villages in Kambwali's chiefdom belong to eleven different tribes. None of the tribes is indigenous to the valley.

The tribe, *mutundu* (pl. *mitundu*: the word is also used for a species of animal, bird or tree) or *mushyobo*, is not a descent group. Tribal allegiance, unlike clan affiliation, can be changed with residence. Though never in doubt about their clan, people may be uncertain as to their tribe. Inter-tribal differences in custom were never considerable. Neither physical type, form of settlement, nor language are now reliable indications of tribal origin. Certain characteristics are traditionally attributed to particular tribes: the Bemba are proverbially cruel, the Shila good fishermen and canoe-makers; the Tabwa are renowned as witches and for the beauty of their women,(2) the Lomotwa for their quarrelsomeness. In spite of territorial dispersion, members of a tribe consider themselves *lupwa lumo*, "of one stock". The chiefs of neighbouring tribes occasionally visit their former subjects established in Kazembe's country.

The Lunda possessed a special status and constituted a sort of nobility to which distinguished outsiders - non-Lunda chiefs and headmen - could be admitted by being invested with Lundahood (*ubulunda*).

DEMOGRAPHY

No estimates are available for the population in the valley on the western (Belgian Congo) side. On the eastern side in Northern Rhodesia it was estimated by Coxhead at 32,000 in 1914.(3) He made no attempt, however, to distinguish between the various tribal groups, referring to all the subjects of the Kazembe as "the Lunda". According to more recent estimates the eastern population approaches 50,000 and shows signs of rapid expansion. It is now concentrated in some 300 villages strewn along the Luapula by the trunk road built on the hard land next to the riverside swamps. No figures are available to indicate variations in the density of population, which must be very high locally as many of the villages adjoin one another forming a continuous row of habitations along the side of the road.

Except for missionaries there are no resident Europeans in Kazembe's kingdom. On Nkuba's side a group of colonial officials and traders live at Kasenga.

Mobility has always been high and numbers have fluctuated widely as a result of migrations due to wars and to the popularity of individual chiefs.(4) A large proportion of the population is said to have left the country during the reign of Keleka, the fourth Kazembe, remembered for his atrocities.(5)

(1) Maes and Boone, 1935, p.135.
(2) Livingstone, 1874, I, p.259.
(3) Coxhead, 1914, p.64.
(4) Livingstone, op.cit., p.254.
(5) Livingstone, op.cit., p.265.

7:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1940 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

621 624 described, as well as existing villagers which have been given, with or without the inhabitants' goodwill, to a relative of the chief. Besides these new headmanships, there are those founded in the chief's predecessors' reigns and described as such, and on the whole less dependent on the present ruler. The proportion of new to old villages in Citimukulu's district in 1933 was as follows:

On 160 *villages:*

	per cent.
New villages	28
Villages with one previous holder of the headmanship	16
Villages with two previous holders of the headmanship	10
Villages with three or more holders of the headmanship	40
Villages constituted from remnants of two old villages	6

The skill with which he allots headmanships, and the positions in which he places his own relatives, contribute greatly to a chief's power.

621 ●166 In spite of the provisions for inheritance of headmanships, the Bemba village is an impermanent community from many points of view. It moves every four or five years, in keeping with the practice of shifting cultivation, and is liable to disruption at the death of an important member or at any loss of popularity by the headman. The plentiful supply of land and the many alternative possibilities of kinship grouping provide ample opportunities for a man to change from one village to another if he pleases, and in any case he is almost bound to live in a series of communities during his lifetime, e.g. the village of his birth, that to which he moves when he marries, any other village he may go to when he acquires the right to move his wife and family from her people's care, and lastly, in some cases, a community of which he may acquire the headmanship through succession to his maternal uncle. Hence, although a man's companions and fellow workers are those of his *umushi* and he speaks with some affection of the village of his birth or of his mother's people (*icifulo*), yet the bonds of kinship are much stronger than those of the impermanent local group. A Bemba is a member of a *ulupwa* and may move as he pleases to live with any of the relatives composing it, and he is the subject of a chief and may obtain permission to live in any part of the latter's territory, but his ties to a given locality are not necessarily strong.[1]

[1] cf. my *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia* (1939), chap. vii.